



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Poems.

THE TITANS OF TO-DAY

THE SYREN'S ISLE,
and other Poems by
the Author of
NEOSTRIS.

280. s.

44.



600082947-





THE
TITANS OF TO-DAY,
AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
SESOSTRIS.



LONDON:
HOPE & CO., 16, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1854.

280. s. 44.

LONDON:

HOPE AND CO., PRINTERS, 16, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

When my tired thoughts have travelled east and west,
Through many a mine, the purest ore to prove,
How sweet it is to call them down, and rest
Their drooping pinions in the shades of Love.
Then, Lady-Muse, believ't, if I aspire
To pay thee homage in a verse so weak,
It is as much to quench my fond desire,
As that thy praise my grateful tongue should speak.
Yet for the sweet gifts proffered from thy shrine
I am so much thy debtor, that I think
No other charms can ever banish thine,
And cause my now-admiring eyes to blink ;
But if some other beauty check this pride,
And kill the self-reproach of being too fond,
Thou wilt forgive me, for I think, when tried,
Each to the other's service will respond,
Her charms will yield a happy theme for song,
And thou'lt make richer what to them belong.



THE TITANS OF TO-DAY.

It is impossible at this time to contemplate the position and prospects of Old World civilization, and the powerful menace which at the hand of the Demigod of the North is virtually directed against it, without experiencing that occasional momentary stillness of the heart, which is the sure sign that an important future hath seized upon and mastered its expectation. Whatever be the pretext, and whatever the nominal subject-matter of contention, let the scabbard once be thrown away, and we shall surely have to abide the issue of success or defeat to one of the two great principles of despotism or of constitutional liberty ; and although the result in a world the scheme of which is one of indefinite progress, cannot be doubtful, still it is not less certain, that years, nay, perhaps centuries of retardation may be the unhappy consequence of protracted war. In the following piece my desire has been to personify the principles, the shadows of whose mighty struggling are now so

thickly falling amongst us ; and the object of this short Introduction is in some measure to redeem it from that charge of obscurity (if such there be) which I fear too justly hangs over much of the poetry of the present hour.

Come with me, friends, and I will show you Love—
 A leap to thunder-cloud-land, through the stars,
 And past the boldest comet-ranger ; Lo !
 The central and the satellite suns are gone,
 Their rays exhausted, sunk in space, and died,
 Ere thrice had pulsed our brain ; alone, unsphered,
 And breathless, we o'er ocean-chaos hang,
 With awe not fear. No fear with God and Love !

Boundless the sounding swell of our vast sea,
 Tumultuous, fathomless, with column'd gleams
 Of light, we know not whence, mysterious, wild,
 And shadowed as with outstretched wings of gods
 Struggling to giant life, amidst the roar
 Of thunder, pealing—Whence, and whither ? Hark !
 Creation hath another throe to-day.

And what are these ? The gods whose lightning
 thoughts

Control our world ; as if the Limitless Power,
 That gave to man some scope for his free will,
 Now rolled itself back from a loftier sphere,
 And thus consigned his world to less than God,
 Mighty not mightiest, good but not the best,

And hence imperfect and akin to pain.
Lo ! where they stand, sublime in power and pride,
Starring their mighty fronts, and looking rule
To the farthest isles of space, the glowing worlds
Of suns and satellites ; their ample thrones
Inlaid with lightning, and with fallen stars
That from their spheres have plunged to chaos back
In glowing embers ; side by side they stand,
Thus side by side that from our sun a ray
Might join them in an age, but some are there
Who, front to front, glare to the deepset soul,
And, with the lightning furies of a glance,
Explode the surcharged air. Peal rides on peal.

Lo ! the spread winds roll back a heaven of clouds,
And from his vast throne, draped with thunder-falls,
Uprisen a king-god stands,* with outstretched arm,
And hand that could have clutched and crushed a star,
Seconds the shot defiance of his eye.

Splendour and Beauty were to him as slaves
Uplooking for his smile ; but through all smiles
Reflecting his, the palsy lines of fear
Trace their distorting course ; a blazing crown,
Living with light, is on his brow ; a chain
Of coronets round his neck ; and at his side
Lie sceptres sidling swords, so ranged ye doubted
Which were the weapon ; and above his head

* The Genius of Despotism:

Rolls a vast canopied vapour, where his form,
A vaster shadow from the light of pride,
Hangs ever o'er him, and to himself presents
The master-lines of being ; but cold, alone,
The baleful centre of a barren sphere,
His heart hath nought to feed on save itself,
And its factitious cravings.

Hark ! with voice

That rends the thunders, as a shepherd's pipe
Is swallowed by the clang of brazen trumps
Bellowing a desperate charge, aloud he cries
To one more ancient, of majestic mien,
But yet whose brow no crown, but locks of gray,
Massively frame, and who with sullen eye
(Sullen to meet the oppression he abhors,
Even as old Saturn at the scoff of Jove),
Unquailing, flings the scorn, like broken waves,
Back on their ocean-sire ; he knew not fear
To use it, or to feel. Thus the king spake,
In words whose echoes boomed upon my heart,
And shook these petty leaves of language down
On a love-hungering soil :—

“ Rebel accurst,

Thy thoughts have been like jags of iron thrown
Amongst the wheels of the world, my petted Isle,
Where man, the nursling of Eternity,
Flaunts his flesh robes, and arrogates to-day ;
Why hast thou dared to toil beneath the base

Of that bright pile where kings are pinnacles,
 And lengthened lines of noble races make
 Rich tracery on the front ?—That world is mine,
 Its human greatness is of me compact,
 The sure result of that well-ordered rule,
 Which forces out from each all each can yield
 For one vast end, though by itself unseen.
 What though the toiling peasant in the vale
 Cannot behold the star,—shines it less bright ?
 Is it less portion of the universe ?
 And claims its beauty less the meed of praise ?
 I made him not, this man, nor his fool thoughts,
 And madly charging passions ; what he is
 I take up like a shell upon his shores,
 Uncaring where it grew ; success is god,
 No matter whence or how, 'tis in the fane,
 And I have led him to the very shrine ;
 Where dost thou gaze along the range of the past
 For the resting spots of Fame ? ”

“ *Where at the base*

*Most human hearts lie crushed, and oozing forth
 Their waste and blood-defiled affections, pour
 Into the black abyss of things forgot—,
 “ There let them rot ; the peaks alone I see,
 All else is past”—.*

“ *Immortals have no past,*

*But live and move through all eternity
 Clothed with one vast to-day ; their cast off robes*

*Are in the grave, the spirit of their thought
 And every petty act that scrapes the sand,
 Ere to the eternal ocean they are drawn,
 Is of their being an everensate part,
 Vital beyond all change ; it shall, it must be,
 Or God's eternal justice is a cheat,
 And the great sphere that looks like endless love
 Is cracked and hollow. Thine the world, and thine
 Its human greatness ?—yes ; if human ills
 Make up the great account : wars, tyrannies,
 Voiceless oppressions squeezing out the life,
 Swarm thick upon thee with the leprous stains
 Now hid so bravely ;—thine, thou gorgeous lie—”*

That felon word struck shot-like to the brain,
 And every fibre like a falling oak
 Shook to the farthest atoms of his frame,
 And fury tore the sinews of his face
 To fierce distortion, and the deep white heat
 Glared terribly—an ice-god struck to fire.

*“ Alas the splendours on the starry brow
 When the foul cavernous heart is dripp'd with ice,
 And gnawn and eaten by a thousand sins !
 Thy bright crown arches o'er a blackened flood,
 Thick with corruption ; glimmers from decay
 Are thy uncertain glories ; pools of blood
 Have fed the roots of thy most palmy groves,
 And thy triumphal arches' hot cement
 Hath thence been moistened. Peace thou canst not love,*

*For peace will surely join both hearts and hands
Until the bright belt stretches round the world
Thick strewn with pearls of love and charity."*

"Melt me such pearls in grand Ambition's cup,
And I will drink them though they turn to fire.
Know'st thou the jets that in man's lake of time
Seem Isles and landmarks? Are not all their names
The very symbols of concentrated power—
Of grandeur, force, and greatness else unknown,
And weak in many but a mighty one?"

*"Mighty to rapine, mighty to revenge,
Mighty to falsehood, bigotry, and woe!
I tell thee, sceptred-power, I love the race
Which thou the child of false desert must scorn,
Knowing how much thy sacrifice ascends
From base idolatry. Oh, for the heart
Where truth's a canker!"—*

And with equal eye
And equal front uprose the crownless one
And rested on his heart; he knew the plunge
Was near, and roused his hope; and thick from far
Rushed, like a bursting ocean, hosts that ranged
Their arms on either side; high crested these
With all the fervour of enduring pride
That breeds the hollow consciousness of worth,
And thence in turn is nourished, feeding thus
On its own flesh, and with incestuous lust
Gendering a monstrous brood—look in their hearts,

Hating each other ; hating most the power
That fetters them to hatred, but whose fear
Forces their sick lives in one common mould,
And makes one bed suit all,* and these distract
Fierce and revengeful, gnashing their own jaws
With fitful ire, but safe as rooted oaks
Clutched in the soil. A peal of horror roll'd
O'er all their heads, its lightnings were the eyes
That shot defiance o'er the vast abyss.

Wild shrieks from dungeon depths, sighs from lost
homes,
Revengeful curses scathing black the heart
From which they leap, and burning in the eyes

* Our old friend Procrustes has a worthy successor in the despot of to-day. Like the cutting sea winds, that chill all growth the moment an aspiring plant strives to elevate itself above a certain low and sheltered level, despotism denies all open and healthy expansion of speculative research or experimental investigation, from the vital necessity it is under of maintaining a superiority amongst radical equals ; a result only to be produced in succession by the agency of force and cunning directed to the production and maintenance of inferiority in its victims. Hereditary caste and occupation are admirably well suited for this purpose, and though no doubt there are individuals who could not be better placed than under such a system (as we may presume there were some lieges of the exact dimensions of our friend above alluded to), still its manifestly stunting, setting aside its unworthily haphazard nature, clearly disqualifies it from holding a permanent place in a system where in all conscience we want all the progress we can obtain—a system of debased but highly endowed humanity.

Of those they strike, like liquid fire, despair
With hollow eyes, and hearts that live in death ;
Corruption kneaded in the pristine life ;
Vice like a black stain on an open brow
Struck on fair youth ; and poverty ; and pain ;
And ruin with distorted sides, and eyes
Hollow as cast shells on a desolate shore :
All these with hideous shape and dreary sound
Crush in the air and stifle up the heart
With expectation of some untold woe.

Laws must be forced upon evasive man,
Not chosen ; and twice ten thousand voices cried
For masters, and to drown each other's cry
More fiercely shouted for the master's praise :
*" God gave us freedom, man hath forged his chains,
And man alone denies what God hath given."*

And now they meet, nerved with unbounding hate,
And fiercely hungered for each rival heart ;
The thickening air grows sullen, and the night
Shakes her vast shroud with horror and in fear
She may not cover such a world of woe.
They strike, peal sounds on peal, and blow meets blow,
Like tilting planets in a field of air ;
When lo ! the fearful change : Revenge and Pride,
Fierce, and hot glaring in each other's eyes,
Back on their brains recoil, with horrid shrieks,
For crackling up their sinews, seething blood,
And hissing, to the marrow, fire, a hell

Dives inward and devours, till what were forms
Like fire in fire are lost, and all is hell.
Hell gleams upon the suns ; and at high noon
A redder fierceness than of setting day
Appals the hearts of men. But all's not yet
For never are despair and death the end—
Despair is human, mighty love divine.

O dark browed cavern, where the gems are formed
Which Death, sure delver, puts in nobler hands,
How soon the phantoms that suck out men's souls—
Ambition, Envy, carking Avarice,
Mistrust that hates itself and saddens most,
With all the cross-bred monsters of their creeds,
Shall stand revealed, and die of light and truth,
When through thy rents and fissures shall shine in
Th' immortal radiance of unclouded love—
Creation's master soul, the heart of being,
The sole quiescence, sole eternity.

And this must be ; for Power with all its worlds,
And Wisdom, that points clear their mazy sweep,
And Justice whose unerring balance turns
At a sunbeam's weight, these are God's attributes ;
But God is Love, and Love is very God.

Hence from the ashes of the crownless one,
Pure for the birth of freedom and of bliss,
The babe of mighty Love, that young immortal
Arose, and looked a sunbeam on the world ;

Then danced the bright blood through the veins of men,
And leaped the heart, and flashed the generous eye,
And Hope, shrunk herald, died, without regret ;
For Prophet is not when the God hath come.

P O E M S .

I.

TO HOPE.

Sweet flatterer, thou that mak'st all lovely things
Thy words and phrases to beguile the mind,
Till nought seems good but what the future brings,
For ever brings, but never leaves behind,
Come when thou wilt thou never com'st in vain ;
I know the dead all mocked thee ere they died,
Their past was too much hid by present pain,
Or thy sweet gifts had ne'er been thus denied.
Who on the wide earth, be he king or slave,
An outcast churl, or from a palace sprung,
Hath plucked a flower so sweet as that you gave
When things had worth because their world was young ?

II.

A shout for the Briton ! The Genius of Power
Hath passed from the East where he stood in his prime,
The Greek and the Roman have triumphed their hour,
And stand in the distance with aspect sublime.
And think not the boast is ungracious and vain,
That the Briton shall form a bright link in the chain,
When the dross shall descend to the earth whence it came,
And his bright points emerge in the sunlight of fame.

Too near to this grandeur, discoloured we view
Some rays which the distance of ages shall blend
Into glory as bright, as unspotted, and true,
As shall match with the best till such glories shall end.
And if ever from Britain the sceptre shall pass,
And her fair lands are till'd by the hands of a slave,
(For thousands of years are but sands in the glass,
And as sure as the cradle, so sure is the grave)
With the chief of Earth's nations, the heirs of the free—
Bright honour shall rest on us Lords of the Sea.

And oh, daughters of Britain, should Beauty descend
Like an angel unfallen, perchance she might bend
Her eyes on the East, where the maids are as fair
As the half opened roses they twine with their hair ;

Their light for a moment on Georgia might fall,
And linger where Helen deserted her hall ;
But oh, what a start and a smile would there be—
How soon she'd forget them, how swift she would flee
To her daughters who dwell on the Isles of the Sea.

And a shout for the first of those daughters, the bride
Whom the Islands have placed on the top of their pride,
For a beacon whose fire shall direct every blow
When the spite of the traitor is working below,
And in letters of light on her standard unfurl'd
Shall again show in Britain the hope of the world.

III.

TO FANCY.

Oft hast thou borne me like a curious child
Far from men's eyes when they might deem me nigh,
And told me tales which as I heard I smiled,
Or checked my mirth with wakening sympathy ;
And all-beguiled I'd prattle in thine ear
Of when young Time began to wing his flight,
Searching through mists no sun of earth can clear
To catch the aspect of some primal height.
Contentless labour, better 'tis to bask

In pleasant sunshine, questionless of light,
Than strain the orbs unfit for such keen task
Till light's excess becomes unchanging night ;
Then tell me tales that I may smile or weep,
And not be thankless for a feeling mind,—
The sweetest flowers can scarce do more than creep,
And hence when oaks are torn lie safe behind.

IV.

What would'st thou have ? Feed on high thoughts, and die
Amid wild doubts in intellectual strife ;
Or plunge thy head below the mystery
Of this strange being, and live unprobing life ?
Even then the forged desires which we must heave
Into our minds lest they grow desolate,
Content no more than sand can fill a sieve ;
They touch the film and but the film of fate.
Go think on what thou may'st be,—can'st be here,
And ask thyself the question, Wherefore this ?
And the sole answer undefined and drear
Will drop a bitter on thy dreams of bliss.
I sometimes dread to think what I may be,
So changed from what I am ; the world may cast

My mind anew, and make me wish to flee
As a false hope the star that led my past.
Yet not perchance less happy should I change ;
Nay then I think I'd deem the change were well,
Though from the present should I never range
I'd deem that change a downward slope to hell.
So the mind's formed by that which presses round,
And each man thinks his own the rule of man,
And what is right, and therefore from one ground
I would an action bless, another ban.
The boundless streams of wisdom, space, and time,
Ere long shall draw my spirit in their flow,
But He who set it in this wintry clime—
He will protect it when I cease below.
Death comes, it must come—and this frame shall be
The trampled clod it hath been, but within
I feel an awful hope that to be free
From quick clod—bondage is a bliss to win ;
Though what that bliss I know not, nor can know,
Then with unconscious calm I dare confide
My soul to Him who never built on woe
A single canon though so much betide.

V.

O Love, is thine a measure
We must tread while yet we grow,
Or forfeit else a pleasure
No after age can know ?
Doth manhood aye dissemble
When with fervency 'twill bend
And clasp *her* to a sterner breast—
A lover and a friend ?
No ; youth may glow with passion,
But the fickle flame will bow
Beneath the sneer of Fashion
Or Ambition's sterner brow ;
But the heart the world hath harrowed,
Though it could not touch the core
If its sympathies are narrowed,
Will but love its chosen more ;
And in sunshine and in sorrow
Will love, shelter, and defend
The gentle one in whom he found
A lover and a friend.

VI.

THE SYREN'S ISLE.

“ Row gently, friends, there's sunshine on our course,—
Life's morning mists are fading fast away ;
Our hearts begin to feel the vital force
Of genial pleasure brightening into day ;
Row gently, friends ;
How sweet the gale from yonder palmy Isle
Comes murmuring down, the dimpled waters smile
Beneath its touch, and heave to be carest,
Like a young maid when mutual love's confest.
Row gently, friends, thither our course we steer ;
Why are we cautioned ? what is there to fear ?
Blue seas around us, golden skies above,
Joy at our hearts, and all things breathing love.”

Such was the song of youth, with heart sincere,
Guileless nor thinking guile,
As on the sea of life he gathered near
The syren Pleasure's Isle.
Light ran the blood his eager veins along,
Bright was his eye, and cheerful was his song,
His thoughts with freshest dews of life were fed,
And hope enchanting hovered round his head.

Then cam'st thou, Fancy, queen of mysteries,
And with thy hand of light,
Held'st forth thy prism before his eager eyes,
Clothing earth's meanest things with rainbow dyes,
And gems as bright
As through the dewy grasses of the lawn
Radiantly glitter on the robe of Dawn.
On tiptoe standing at the prow,
Thou winn'st his eye,
And beckon'st forward with thy radiant brow
To where thy cherished pleasures lie.
With sparkling look, and lips apart,
And passion wakening all his heart,
Forward he starts, and sees afar
Pleasure on her gilded car,
Nor turns aside his gaze from her delusive star.

And hark ! what sounds are these,
So more than earthly sweet ?
Wandering harmonious o'er the sunny seas,
Steeping the soul in dream-like ecstacies,
For angel lovers meet.
Row on, row on ; why should we fear,
When all in sight, and sound, and taste, 'is fair ?
Row on, row on, yet nearer and more near,
Age is unlovely, solitude is drear,—
We've strength to spare.

"Come hither, youth ; life passeth quickly by,
And age will come and steal the fire away
That makes thy spirit soar so blithe and high,
And, eagle-like, outgaze the orb of day ;
Hither, come hither, ready to thy hand
The golden cups of sparkling pleasure stand,
Song shall entrance thee, wine shall warm thy blood,
Earth's choicest dainties be thy common food,
Bright eyes shall look in thine, soft hands shall press,
And thrill thy soul with speechless tenderness."

Row on, row on, oh ! wherefore should we fear,
When all in sight, and sound, and taste, is fair ?
Row on, row on, yet nearer and more near,
Age is unlovely, solitude is drear,
Why should we care ?

Alas ! whose whitened bones are those that lie
On that dread shore ?

What wrecks are scattered far and nigh,
Enough to make the steadfast passer-by
Weep evermore ;

The brave, the generous, and the fair,
Have found the grave of virtue there,
More finely wrought, more quickly torn,
The first to joy, the keen'st to mourn ;
Some moments list they to the strain
That lures them o'er the treacherous main,

Till onward, onward, by the rushing tide,
 Madly they're cast
 On pitiless rocks where ravening wolves abide,
 Where hope from human aid is all denied,
 And naught but mercy can redeem the past.

VII.

I know no ill but hath its profit too,
 If from ourselves we could example take,
 And by old errors shape our course anew,
 As they who once were tangled shun the brake ;
 And therefore 'tis that when I lose my rest,
 And toss and tumble on a bed of care,
 Like a poor child on a dead mother's breast,
 This gleam of sunshine lightens all the air,
 That I am restless but to know unrest,
 And as the base degree deformity
 Shows beauty what it is, so to be blest
 Is garnered by to know adversity.

VIII.

RAVELLA'S REVENGE.

A SPANISH TRADITION.

The storm's in the forest,
 The olives are torn,
 There'll be floods in the Xelna
 Ere break of the morn ;

The rush of thick waters
Grows fast on the ear,
As the shadows of night
Turn to phantoms of fear ;
But the tempest without
Is as summer's sweet breath,
Compared with the passions
That trifle with death.

Who is he that rides madly
Through forest and flood ?
Too brave to be base,
And too proud to be good ;
With bent brow, all bared
To the tempest's wild din,
And white lip set firm
As the spirit within.
Ride, John of Ravella,
From fear thou art free,
Since the wife thou didst cherish
Was faithless to thee ;
What reck'st thou of tempests ?
Thy heart is a flame,
Since the brand of dishonour
Was set on thy name.

There's no foe like the felon
Who comes as a friend,

The traitor, but known
When too late to defend ;
The graceful, the courted,
With truth for his crest,
Whilst the foul heart of falsehood
Beats dark in his breast.

By the proud towers of Lora
There's yawning a deep,
Whence the torrent's scarce heard,
Though it is but a leap ;
Neither pine tree nor lichen
Can cling to its side,
Even the wind-carried moss seed
Not long there can bide ;
Rocks jagged by the torrent
Shoot up at its feet,
For the stronghold of horror
Such sentries are meet ;
There the stream once 'tis said,
At an earthquake's deep shock,
To caverns unfathomed
Sank down through the rock ;
Nor for years did its waters
Rush back to the light,
But traversed unfilling
Those mansions of night.

Here restlessly wanders
That falsehearted knight,
Who came with a blessing
But left with a blight ;
Who gave up for pleasure
What worlds cannot buy,
The peace of a conscience
Whose hope is on high.
He hath wrecked too that fair one
Who clings to his side,
His child's at her breast
But she was not his bride ;
Those pale lips once pledged
To another her faith,
And a vow was then uttered
To bind her till death.

On that fair brow was once clasped
A jewel less bright,
Than the glances that filled
One true heart with delight ;
On her finger so slender
A ring once was seen,
A gift held more dear
Than the crown of a queen ;
But the vow hath been broken,
The jewel is gone,
The bright looks are faded,
And ring there is none.

He is downcast and sullen,
Yet gleams in his eye
The wild look when passion
To frenzy draws nigh ;
He looks up, and the blood
From his bitten lip starts,
To the proud soul stern justice
No comfort imparts ;
He turns to his victim
And long is their gaze,
Not their love but despair
That cold meeting betrays.

Strange thoughts are upstirring
His spirit within,
This world lost, why should not
Another begin ?
He looked towards the torrent
That echoed below,
And wiped for a moment
The damp from his brow,
Repassed on thought's lightning
The path he had trod,
And gathered his heart
For one cry to his God,
When hark ! on the rocks' ring
The hoofs of a steed,
And the pause of that moment
Hath spared him the deed.

One cry from Ravella,
One shriek from the dame,
And they've met with that fury
Death can only tame,
All the long months of suffering
And frenzy and hate
Undammed on one moment
Rush headlong to fate ;
On the brink of th' abyss
They are straining their might,
Even the hard rock is splintered
And glances with light ;
They heed not the thunder
That roars on that rock,
Ha ! why are they Sundered ?
Why still at that shock ?
The dark frame of Lora
Hangs o'er the abyss,
" If this be my fate,
Thine too shall be this."

His death gripe on Ravella
Is gliding him down,
And fierce joy for a moment
Gleams over his frown,
The next all unnerved
He grows ashy and cold,

For the lightning hath struck him
And blasted his hold ;
Down, down through the black mist
The traitor is gone,
And on earth the wild justice
Of vengeance is done.

And there lies Ravella
Thrown dead to the ground,
But one instant of triumph
His spirit hath found ;
And she the ill-fated,
Unhappily fair,
The soiled flower of beauty
Hath sealed her despair,
Her dress hath she torn
And wrapped heedfully round
The poor babe whom she laid
By a sheltering mound ;
Then with eye lit with frenzy,
And step wildly fleet,
She hath reached her lord's corse,
And fallen dead at its feet.
The storm's in the forest,
The olives are torn,
There'll be floods in the Xelna
Ere break of the morn ;

But thunder and lightning
 And tempest's fierce breath,
 All unheededly rave
 At the portals of death.

IX.

THE MIRROR OF CLOUDS.

Come through the ages to th' Assyrian plains
 And suns that set four thousand years ago ;
 The waves of time recede, and like a tract
 Of desolate seabank leave the western isles,
 And all the peopled Europe of to-day ;
 A suckling wolf roams by the nameless Thames
 And bear-cubs gambol on the banks of Seine.

*[Scene, Babylon. A chamber in a lofty tower
 overlooking the city—Midnight. A Chaldean
 Priest is seated reading.]*

That which hath been was that which must have been,
 And that which shall be that which must be too ;
 Oh, whither hath this led me ? not to truth.

[Rises and looks out.]

Fair night, thy loveliness hath been to me
 Fatal as woman's, thou that woo'st the spirit
 Trustingly forth, until thy cold blue depths
 Become the home and fount of thoughts sublime,

That leave our days like poor unheated things
To limp and crawl unmeaning into graves ;
I fear thee, Night, there's terror in thy beauty, ;
For thou can'st win me from my fellow man ;
Yet hopeless wherefore fear ? I am alone,
Hearts to my touch are but as coffin lids
And sound as hollow, oh ! alone, alone,
The heat hath passed, the moulded metal's cold,
All social aspirations I've o'erleaped
To fall I know not where—alone, alone,
Yes, even with thee, thou gem of all this earth,
Queen of the nations, Babylon the blest,
Oh, tell me, if thy mighty heartstrings shake
At touch of human thought or energy,
When thou wert scattered fragments, and the spirit
Which starting from thy womb controls this world
Was yet a germ, when on a shadowless plain
Hinds fed their flocks, and herds grazed on the place
Where palaces have sprung ; ere thou, Euphrates,
Proud minion of our grandeur sought'st thy home,
Through marble archways, and by stairs of gold,
Lit only by the melancholy stars
That silent looked upon thy peaceful way,
Like contemplation on a passing world,
Was there a time when mortal eye could see
And mortal tongue could tell thy coming greatness ?
O desolate silence, sadder than the winds
That moan through ruined halls where empire sat ;

I bring no answer from the hollow night,
And I must rise to where we rise no more ;
Home of all Wisdom, Birthplace of all Might,
O Nature, Belus, Jupiter, or God,
Thou being beyond all name to souls that yield
Their life to adoration, thou that art
The first and latest causes, and with whom
To be is to know all things, hast thou writ
On heaven or earth before the hour is born
The deed that shall be ?—Oh my beating heart
What life is this ?—there's something cannot die ;
Oh come, for I can dare it, spirits, powers,
Unclogged by mortal clay, whose essence is
Less gross than sunlight, who have looked on man
Since our first father raised his lonely face
In wonder to yon stars, and since have watched
The rising tide of passion till its waves
Are numberless as now, come if ye own
The strong communion of this world of ours ;
And hold the spirit that plays about its dust
For kindred with your own, come, I dare it,
And call ye with the voice of friend or foe,
For love or barter ; hear, oh hear, I dare it,
Away with spells and necromantic charms,
Blind pathways which the dupe and sorcerer tread,
I stand alone,—a man without a tie,
Whose hearth no smile, whose grave shall have no tear,
Backed by th' unmelting ice of resolute will

To commune with ye.

[*Thunder peals.*]

Hark ! it comes, it comes,

The sacred fusion hath begun at last,
 Even now my soul is lightened of its dust,
 I see without its vision, hear without
 Its hearing, thrill untouched ; the world is burnt
 In extacy, and though the same in shape,
 'Tis ashy, crumbling, dead ;—no earth is here,
 Heaven rains in splendours on me, and the stars
 Are lost in light from whence the stars were made,
 As rain-drops are of ocean ; Unknown power,
 I dare it—

[*Thunder is heard again, the Chaldean falls in a
 swoon, and the spirit of Orion descends upon the
 tower.*]

Meet me then, O restless soul,

'Tis I, Orion, who was once as thou,
 Thy thoughts have echoed through the universe
 Though human ear beneath this fated tower
 Had listened in vain ; I come, but love thee not,
 And know thou ask'st as little as I give ;
 Aspire and we are met—

And yet am I

A mortal still.

Poor worm,

[*Priest starting up.*] Immortal too,

Proud spirit, that set'st a gulf of scorn betwixt us,

What more art thou ?

*The fire without the clay,
The thing thou hast believed when thou hast stood
From eve till morn upon some perilous height,
Around whose base the tameless ocean raved,
Lit by the frequent flash, and roaring wild
Against the breaking thunder, dreadful music
The desperate love to hear ; or when thou gazedst
Unearth'd and wrapped into the starry skies
That gave thee back with overpowering weight
Of speechless awe, the sense of boundless power
And human littleness, and gendered deep
The faith that Nature held not there her hand
When worms like ye were fashioned, toys of scorn,
Proud of a little hour and gaudy wings
Wherewith ye flutter o'er a shady pool,
And call't the universe, each turbid brain
Meting out its own space, centered with pride,
That erring germ of judgment erring ever ;
The fitness that ye find is nothing more
To that this little earth, small as it is,
Can yield to keener senses than the shoot
Which sprang this morning to the sweeping woods
The growth of centuries ; from the meanest atom
A thing of use and beauty, through all shapes
Familiar in thy senses to all changes
Of thoughts sublime beyond the mothly flight
Of thy imaginings all nature teems*

*For meet intelligence, that lightning ocean
Round God's eternal throne.*

It must be so,
Yet, fitful folly, I have thought no more
Of sensible existence than the fall
Of dust from yonder stone,

*Then was the voice
Of Nature lost upon the roaring tide
Of disaffection; hast thou not begun
A sensible existence which will never,
No never, end; you talk of fabrics
Raised by men's hands or even these steadfast mountains
And say they are the same; whilst man, poor man,
In countless generations falls away;
But raise thy soul to the dread contemplation
Of that eternity which is thy due,
And think this Being shall be still to be,
When suns grow dim through mere antiquity;
Oh say not then man's life is little worth,
Thou hast begun a life shall never end,
Thou hast begun what thou must ever be;
But, child of error, come, renew thy spirit,
And let this touch upon thy marble brow
Unearth thee more.*

What glittering coil is this
Thou crown'st me with? Ha! 'tis a living serpent.
Be still, what dost thou fear?

Not this nor thee,

Nor earth, nor hell, with all its battled powers,
 Of malice fathomless ; I am akin
 To goodness infinite, and power supreme.
*'Tis well—now speak thy will, these thunder clouds
 That roll about us shall sustain for thee
 The vision of the future ; now, be strong,
 The threshold is o'erleaped, and thou art passing
 Into the fane, but one more step and life
 Hath yielded up its secrets to thy gaze
 Never to fade again—What would'st thou see ?
 Assyria's coming kings—*

*[Orion waves his wand and a circle of light breaks
 upon the clouds, across it pass the forms of the
 kings of Assyria, ending with Sardanapalus.]*

Behold them there,—

*Start'st thou at this ? Look, look, some gaze upon thee,
 With frown majestic, some with gladsome hope
 Lighting a haughty brow, some dark and dread
 As monumental marble ; art thou lost
 So soon ?*

O Extacy ! Hail, unborn kings,
 Whose glorious eyes proclaim ye of the line
 Nearest the gods, shadows of years to come
 Sublime in hope, now stamped upon my spirit
 As ye had lived already, bearing with ye
 The proud assurance of enduring empire
 For years uncounted and o'er lands untrod,
 How shall I greet ye through the fervid joy

(O fount long-sealed re-opened once again)
 Ye bring Assyria that its might and worth
 Shall live for ages, nay, shall never die;
 For when oblivion's heaped upon our walls,
 And mounds weigh down our long-dishonoured fanes,
 Then nations yet unnamed shall at this fire
 Light many a torch, and, glory to our race
 Beyond all glories of a thankless world,
 Illume their temples, palaces, and shrines,
 With that which first on fair Assyria's plains
 Shed forth its lustre ; science shall not die,
 And art hath here an ever-burning lamp
 For endless renovation ; I too, I
 Shall shine in our hereafter as a ray
 Unnamed but not unworthy ; wondrous spirit
 In whom my faith would gladly see my fate,
 Though now these atoms bow to thee, once more
 Hear, and let thy far-darting sun illume
 The hour when on the next of Nimrod's line
 The crown is set—

[The interior of the temple of Belus with the ceremonial of the coronation of one of the kings appears.]

Thus well hast thou begun—

Beware—

Thou see'st my thought, see'st thou a fear ?

Withhold me not—

Beware—

Thou seest me passing
Into the fane, come on—
Once more, beware—
Never, do this or nought is done, the lives
Of kings and subjects countless as the stars
May pass untouched, my own must bear for me
An endless meaning ; high or low, in triumph
Or misery, I will meet it ; let me see
Myself to-morrow.

*Lo ! thy fate is on thee,
And strife is past, behold the victory,*
[*The chamber of the Chaldaean appears mirrored
before them ; the cold light of the morning
shines upon a group gathered around a dead
body ; as they lift it, the face is turned, and
the Chaldaean, recognising himself, falls dead.*]

*One more awaits the morning ; be thy pride
Buried insensate, since thou couldst not wait
In peace and trustfulness ; was not the light
Of many-coloured Hope, the ray that still
Through Eden's barred and massy portals steals
Down o'er the world, as yet enough for thee,
But thou must meet the lightning in the eye,
Butt thy poor skull against the pitiless crash
Of an advancing world, and lift thy hand
To drag the seven-times heated sun upon thee ;
Scathed branch lie there, and when the rising spirit
Of new existence brings thee bloom again,*

*Remember, that from Him who willed the worlds,
To the last atom, is no place for pride ;
For He hath no compeer, and all things else
Stand on this level, that His lightest breath
Can make them nothing ; Power which men call great,
And greater yet than human senses span,
Is not one link more near the source of power
Than a child's grasp, the infinite's between ;
Yet, as with thee, on on the infection spreads,
Through aspiration, till the noblest spirits
Grow cankered at the top ; redeem it, Heaven,
Or, known, acknowledged still, 'twill never change.*

X.

Hail, Heaven-relying Truth, whose heart
Is safe, as is the sun above,
From Envy's most malignant dart,
For God to thee is ever Love ;
Thou wert ordained, ere angels fell,
Through all creation's bounds, to be
The guardian of a sacred spell,
That lifts the struggling spirit free,
Above the roaring tide of hell,
And mire of poor mortality.

Thrones, dominions, all that bear
Here the scenic robes of power,
What are they to lull our fear
In the spirit-searching hour,
When the vision of the world,
Selfish pride hath for us plann'd,
From before the soul is hurled,
And alone with God we stand.
Be the world and all its glory
Hurled into the burning sun,
Truth but then confirms her story
Of eternal honours won,
Not by arts, whate'er their cunning,
Not by arms, whate'er their might,
Not by wisdom's self though shunning
Every deed that dreads the light ;
No, the first link of truth's chain
Is fixed against the Almighty seat,
The other in a Saviour slain
Is cast at vilest sinners' feet ;
Truth, that faith alone can know thee ;
In the wilderness of thought
Fitful gleams awhile may show thee,
But they're gone as soon as caught ;
These were followed in youth's lightness,
But their feverish days are done,
Even as stars must lose their brightness
In the splendour of the sun.

XI.

SPES MORTUA ET REDIVIVA.

Why must increase of knowledge thwart our love ?
Through searching to the dregs of what entices ;
So doth the mind its own undoer prove,
And foil its own ends by its own devices ;
For he whose appetite hath lost its spring
Carries a dead soul in a living head,
As much upon his spirit's rioting
Decay as 'tis when dust to dust is said
Upon his ashes ; hence it is there walk
About this world men whom we deem alive,
They eat, they drink, they smile, look gay, and talk,
But couldst thou neath this lighted surface dive,
Think'st thou to find an equal spirit shed
These outer beams within ? No, they are dead,
The heart beats on, the blood flows to the brain,
The mere mechanic motion halteth not,
The eye may fire, the lip curl with disdain,
Nay, the hand trace what shall not be forgot,
But Hope, the life of life, hath passed away,
'Tis but endurance animates their clay.

Arise ! Look up ! What light breaks from the skies
Thou look'dst upon a lamp, behold the sun,
What in his blaze are earth's dull sympathies,
Its prizes garner'd and its honours won ?
The hope that hath an earthly goal must die,
Its beauties tarnish, glories fade away ;
But there's a nobler which shall lift thee high,
When thoughts unseated from this weary clay,
That is the germ, and that must perish all
Before it quicken, this, oh happy truth,
Woe cannot break, pain thwart, or guilt appal,
For nought can turn the Saviour from his ruth,
Then judge not harshly of thy present state,
Though suffering rack thee, 'tis but thy desert,
Do good and humbly wait upon thy fate,
The hand that caused will heal again thy hurt,
Thus may'st thou profit by what here's amiss,
And win a better world in losing this.









